

Environmental Water Program
Update
11/12/03

The following is the first of what will be regular updates on the EWP to keep you informed of the Program's activities and progress. These updates are intended to be brief overviews of significant actions, action items and notification of upcoming meetings and significant dates. If you would like more detailed information or have questions, please contact Campbell Ingram at (916) 414-6727 or campbell_ingram@fws.gov.

Background:

The Environmental Water Program (EWP) is an element of the California Bay-Delta Program Ecosystem Restoration Program intended to acquire water from willing sellers on streams tributary to the Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta to improve instream conditions. Some objectives of the EWP include:

- Provide flows and habitat conditions for fishery protection and recovery
- Restore critical instream and channel-forming flows
- Improve salmon spawning and juvenile survival in upstream tributaries

Initial EWP efforts will focus on five streams identified to have the highest potential for success: Butte Creek, Clear Creek, Deer Creek, Mill Creek, and the Tuolumne River. These streams have been selected as first priority because they have active groups focused on watershed protection; existing investments made by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, are used by significant numbers of anadromous species, and have historical biological monitoring data available.

The process for identifying willing sellers and designing and monitoring projects will be undertaken by teams including local stakeholders, local agency representatives, a science team, and other agency representatives. This will ensure that all projects are locally sponsored and locally acceptable. All interested parties are welcome to participate on these teams.

The EWP has adopted guiding principles to ensure fairness, local acceptability, and scientific validity. All acquisitions will be:

- made on a willing seller basis;
- jointly developed by local interests and the ERP Implementing Agencies; and
- designed to test hypotheses regarding water management through the use of adaptive management, appropriate monitoring, and independent peer reviews.

Programmatic Update

The EWP Core Team met on November 3rd, topics discussed included: 1) an overview by priority watershed of all actions taken since the September 26 meeting; 2) presentation and review of the 1st EWP Update to include appropriate distribution, and 3) review of the latest draft of an information paper regarding acquisition capabilities of the Core

Team agencies. The group scheduled a tentative next meeting for December 15. Notes from the meeting are available on the eRoom or by request.

Priority Stream Update

Clear Creek

- Public meeting held on September 3, to provide an overview of the program to a broader audience.
- First meeting between the Core Team and the Local Team was held on October 14 at the Western Shasta RCD.
- Target biological objectives: medium intensity high flows in the 2,000 to 5,000 cfs range potentially obtained by paying for forgone power.
- Action Items: Summarize studies on flow, temperature, and gravel movement. Provide a list of BDPAC members. Determine possible effects of Trinity decision on Clear Creek. Draft vision statement for Clear Creek proposal.
- Next Meeting: November 19, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Western Shasta RCD. Purpose: to further develop biological objectives for increased flow proposals on CC.
- There is a two day workshop to discuss the CCDAM model on November 13 and 14.

Mill Creek

- Public meeting held on September 11.
- At the request of the Mill Creek Watershed Conservancy, the EWP will not hold any further meeting until early 2004.
- Action Items: Contact the Los Molinos Mutual to discuss specifics regarding their participation in the program and interest in exploring water use efficiency.

Deer Creek

- Public meeting held on November 4. The DWR groundwater exchange pilot project staff presented alternatives for increasing instream flow on DC. The EWP made a presentation to the group and was characterized as a tool that the group can utilize to address flow objectives. Member of both Stanford Vina ID and Deer Creek ID were present and appeared receptive to moving forward.
- The best opportunities for increase flow are the expansion of the Pilot Project and water use efficiency. California Bay-Delta Program, Water Use Efficiency Program staff attended the Nov. 4 meeting.
- The DWR is taking a lead role in setting and announcing the next meeting. We will send out notices once we have a date.

Butte Creek

- Public meeting September 11.
- First meeting between the Core Team and the Local Team held on October 21 at the Chico DFG office.
- Target biological objectives: potentially increase base flow and secure base flow during dry years and

- Action Items: review previous work by CH2M Hill and FWS and 1930 to present hydrology.
- Next Meeting: November 19, from 1:00 to 3:30 at the Western Canal Headquarters. Purpose: to further develop biological objectives for increased flow proposals for BC.

Tuolumne River

- Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive approach on the Tuolumne, progress on the system is pending the development of a concept paper that will include a discussion of the objectives and tools available for the appropriate CBDP elements. Once this concept paper has been developed and reviewed internally, it will be presented to the Turlock Irrigation District and the Modesto Irrigation District (TID/MID).

Battle Creek

- The EWP has been requested to provide technical assistance to the Battle Creek Adaptive Management Team to address concerns raised by the technical review panel during their review of the Adaptive Management Plan for the Battle Creek Restoration.
- We have been directed to review the AMP and make recommendation on how the document can be revised to better meet the expectations of the reviewers, develop a sediment monitoring section of the AMP, and develop a juvenile habitat usage section of the AMP. Recommendations and drafts of these sections are due by December 4th.